

What is the name of God?

By

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Christian basics › God

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“What’s in a name?” Do you know this saying? People use it to denounce the importance of a name. That can be the case with a lot of names, but not with the name of God. His name is who He is.

The name of God is Lord

“Lord” is the most frequently used name of God in the Bible. Wherever you read “LORD” (with capitals), the Hebrew source text has “יהוה” (JHWH). Translators chose to use LORD for the name JHWH because the pronunciation of JHWH is not certainly known anymore. The reason for this is, that in the Hebrew Bible no vowels were written. People of old times simply knew which vowels belonged to these letters. But the Jews did not pronounce God’s name aloud out of reverence for His holiness, and so the vowels became unknown in the course of history. Jews use the word “Adonai” (= Lord) instead. The word “Lord” refers to someone with a great and unique authority. For example, a king over his people.

In the Biblical context it is used to show the unique authority of God over all things and people.

The meaning of JHWH

Despite the fact that we don't know the exact vowels of the name "JHWH", the story of the calling of Moses, in Exodus 3, sheds more light on its meaning. In this story, God reveals His name "יהוה" (JHWH) for the first time. He tells Moses in the same chapter that He is "אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר" "אֶהְיֶה" "I am that I am" (Exodus 3:14). Moses is to tell the people, "I am has sent me to you." (Exodus 3:14) So, the name "JHWH" is connected with the Hebrew verb for 'to be'. The name "I am that I am" makes clear that God is the never changing, sovereign and unsearchable God. It also means that the Lord is active ("I am"!) and not passive. The Lord sees, hears, knows and delivers His people. Exodus 3: 7-8 states: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians."

Jesus Christ is Lord

The Bible states that Jesus Christ is the same as JHWH. In Romans 10: 9 the apostle Paul says “Jesus is Lord“. He is “our only Master and Lord” (Jude 1:4). Jesus Christ referred to Himself as JHWH. In John 8:58 He says: “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” With the words “I am” He identifies Himself with the eternal “I am that I am”, JHWH. The spiritual leaders understood this very well. They wanted to stone Jesus Christ because of this statement. Even at His arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, it becomes clear that He is the great “I am”. When the soldiers and servants come to get Him there, with their lanterns and torches and weapons, He answers them “I am He”. Shocked by these words, they fall to the ground for Him! (John 18:6)

The LORD comes down from heaven

The revelation of God’s name to Moses and Israel to save them from slavery, is a foreshadowing of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to our world, later in history. He was sent by God the Father to save the world from the slavery

of sin. That is why He came down from heaven and humbled Himself on the cross. He did that in order to save us from our sins and to bring us in faithful obedience to Him. That is why He has a “name that is above every name” (Philippians 2:9). The Bible promises that “everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:21). Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Kneel down and confess that He is your Lord. “For there is no other name under heaven given among men, by whom we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“Lord Jesus Christ You have come to us Born as one with us, Mary’s Son. Led out to die on Calvary, Risen from death to set us free, Living Lord Jesus help us see You are Lord.”

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